

SOL FISHMAN

FORECLOSURE

As told to Maxine Kortum Durney, May 1993, in Sol's office of the Fishman Supply Company, Petaluma, California. Also present and contributing, Rose Freedman Fishman, Sol's wife.

My father was Sam Fishman, my mother was Sarah Krantz. They were both from Poland, and married there in 1913. My father was trained as a locksmith, and came in 1913 to Minneapolis, to his brother. There was big industry in Minneapolis, because of the railways, and my father worked as a journeyman machinist on the building of locomotives.

In Poland the Jews were being driven from their homes, wherever they were. Sarah came to my father by travelling through Siberia, China, Japan, and then arriving in Seattle, in 1917.

In 1917, in World War I, there were plenty of locomotives, but they needed ships. He left the railroad industry and came to San Francisco to the shipyards. The war ended, and tragically they were out of work. They all came to Petaluma, the shipyard workers, the Danes, the Germans, my father and mother, to the chicken business.

He did day work for a year or two on other people's ranches. For awhile he managed a chicken ranch for an absentee owner, before he bought his own place on Chapman Lane, five acres. Everything was divided into five acre lots. This was 1921 or '22.

In 1931, when egg prices were low, he couldn't get enough to pay his feed bill.

The Feed company, Golden Eagle Milling, came in and foreclosed. But my father knew the law. When they came to get the chickens my father said that without a court order they couldn't take the chickens. There has to be a two week delay. A lot of people didn't know they couldn't take personal property to pay a public debt, even to a private firm. Personal property was 100 chickens, a cow, a horse. {Creditors had to leave a man with a way to make a living. M.D.}

Some, to whom money was owed, would come in the middle of the night, and even take the cow, the tools. The farmer would get up in the morning and find all his chickens gone.

In due time they took all our chickens, except the 100.

{Sol was thirteen at the time, the second oldest of five children. I asked him how this affected his father}

My father became very ill, dropped from 180 pounds to 135. He went to doctors in San Francisco, who diagnosed ulcers, and gave him a diet and medicine. He recovered and lived to be eighty six years old.

We were fortunate in that the man we bought the ranch from held the mortgage. We paid, from 1931 to 1936 no

interest, and nothing on the principal. We paid insurance and taxes on the property.

We had eggs, milk, butter, and a garden. In that two weeks delay (before the chickens were removed) we sold the eggs, and kept the money, probably two or three hundred dollars. There wasn't much in the bank.

In 1932 my father bought a truck, a new Ford, one and a half ton flat bed, 40 horse power engine. He could haul five tons of grain from the Valley, barley, wheat, oats, sometimes. He delivered directly to the ranches.

In 1936 my brother Morris, who was in FFA, (in Bart Reardon's high school ag class) had a project of 2000 meat bird chicks. At the time he made quite a bit of money. We thought we would go into heavy meat birds, Rhode Island Reds. We were the first in the county to go solely into meat birds.

Early '37 I went to L.A., and met with the owner of our property. We wanted to refinance. He settled five or six years interest for half, plus the principal which was two or three thousand dollars. We refinanced with the Bank of America.

We went to the Marin School (out at the end of Western Avenue). We went to high school, in town. On Saturday at the football game, we'd leave five minutes before the half, feed the chickens, then rush back to watch three quarters of the last half. We could get it done, there were three of us: my brother Morris, my brother Julius, and me. We drove a 1925 Oldsmobile touring car.

Stark contrast

4/9/98

Santa Rosa Press Democrat

Editor: The March 31 Empire News section was an interesting contrast in ambition and purpose.

The article on the Penngrove militia with its negative ambitions contrasted to the positive outlook and ambition of the horse people.

The horse people are to be commended for their dedication to education and the goals they are working toward. They are the only American team to compete in Europe in a sport that combines training, dedication, practice, working with a partner (the horse) and competing in a European sport.

The militias are dedicated to their own agenda, marching to the beat of their own drummer, defying the laws of our country and wanting to be the judge, jury and prosecuting attorney in disputes.

We of the Jewish faith fear these kinds of militias. We fear those who would take the law into their own hands.

We fear the leaders of the militias, and more than that, we fear those who would follow blindly without considering the consequences. We fear the resurgence of dictatorship as we saw in Europe in the 1930s.

I choose to rely on our police departments, our sheriff, our district attorney, our National Guard in times of emergency, our state and federal laws and our method of enacting these laws.

If we don't like some of the laws, we can change them at election time by electing new representatives. The job of running a democratic government is difficult. We need to give that government all the help it needs.

SOL FISHMAN
Penngrove

Petaluma hate-crime reward rises

By TOBIAS YOUNG
Press Democrat Bureau

PETALUMA — The hate language spray-painted last week on trucks at a local supply company was condemned Monday at City Hall by public and community leaders, as a reward fund for help in capturing the culprits grows beyond \$8,000.

"We can't tolerate this," Mayor Clark Thompson said. "These people to me are worse than criminals. They're chicken. They're bigots. I hope we do find these cowards."

More than two dozen people turned out to the City Council meeting in support of the Fishman family.

The Fishman Supply Co. on Wednesday night was targeted in an apparent hate crime when arsonists spelled "Die Jew" on one delivery truck and set another afire, causing more than \$25,000 in damage.

"We want the Fishman family to know they will never stand alone in their fight against hate," said Petaluma Area Chamber of Commerce President Thom Knudson.

The Northern California Jewish Defense League on Monday announced it was adding \$1,000 to the reward fund for the arrest of those responsible.

Leland Fishman said the fund has received at least \$8,000, and he knows of hundreds more in donations, which haven't been calculated. "We're approaching \$10,000," he said.

Checks should be made out to the Fishman Reward Fund and sent to the Petaluma Chamber of Commerce. Chamber officials will hold it, and if it's never given to someone, the money will be returned, Fishman said.

Sol Fishman, with his late wife, Rose, started the janitorial and paper supply company from scratch 33 years ago before turning it over to their son, Leland Fishman.

On Monday, Sol Fishman's voice broke as he was overcome with emotion in thanking the community for its support and its condemnation of bigotry.

"The one word that comes to me is the word amazing," he said of the community. "I appreciate it."

PETALUMA HISTORICAL MUSEUM
Oral History Program

Unconditional Release Agreement

For and in consideration of the participation by the Petaluma Historical Museum in any programs involving the dissemination of tape-recorded memoirs and oral history material for publication, copyright, and other uses, I hereby release all right, title, or interest in any and to all of my tape-recorded memoirs to the Petaluma Historical Museum and declare that they may be used without any restriction whatsoever and may be copyrighted and published by the said Museum, which may also assign said copyright and publication rights to serious research scholars.

In addition to the rights and authority given to you under the preceeding paragraph, I hereby authorize you to edit, publish, sell and/or license the use of my oral history memoir in any other manner which the Museum considers to be desirable and I waive any claim to any payments which may be received as a consequence thereof by the Museum.

PLACE PETALUMA

CA.

DATE

6-3-93

Bob Fishman
(Interviewee)

Kevin Hurney
(for the Petaluma Historical Museum)

PETALUMA HISTORICAL LIBRARY AND MUSEUM

Oral History Program

Narrator Personal Information Questionnaire

Name FISHMAN SOL
 Last First Middle (Maiden)

Address P.O. BOX 288
PENNGROVE CA. 94951

Marital status: Married ☒ Single ☐ Divorced ☐ Widowed ☐

Birthdate NOV. 4, 1918 Birthplace SAN FRANCISCO

Length of residence in Petaluma (or Sonoma County) 74 YRS

Education: Elementary school ☒

Secondary school ☒ Grad ☒

College ☐ Grad ☐

Other ☐

Occupation(s) or former occupations(s) BUSINESSMAN, FARMER

Travels AUSTRALIA, EUROPE, USSR, ISRAEL
U.S.

Organizations, clubs SIRS

Other special interests SCHOOL BOARDS - 16 YRS

Additional comments

THANK YOU!

PETALUMA HISTORICAL LIBRARY AND MUSEUM
Oral History Program
Family History Questionnaire

<u>Name</u>	<u>Birthdate</u>	<u>Birthplace</u>	<u>Deceased? Date</u>
<u>Parents*</u>			
SAM FISHMAN	JAN. 25, 1885	POLAND	JULY - 1972
SARAH (KRANTZ) FISHMAN	OCT. 15, 1889	POLAND	FEB - 1967
<u>Brothers & Sisters</u>			
ANN (FISHMAN) WEITZMAN	OCT. 7, 1917	MINNEAPOLIS	
MORRIS FISHMAN	JAN. 11, 1920	PETALUMA	
JULIUS FISHMAN	JULY 29, 1921	PETALUMA	
SELMA (FISHMAN) CADER	NOV. 19, 1922	PETALUMA	
<u>Grand-parents*</u>			
<u>Spouse</u>			
ROSE (FREEDMAN) FISHMAN	OCT. 5, 1921	PHILADELPHIA	
<u>Children</u>			
WILLIAM R. FISHMAN	DEC. 22, 1946	SAN FRANCISCO	
NEAL JAY FISHMAN	MAY 3, 1950	" "	
LELAND MARK FISHMAN	MARCH 10, 1957	" "	
GREGG BARTON FISHMAN	FEB. 8, 1960	PETALUMA	
<u>Grandchildren</u>			
BRIAN HOWES FISHMAN	AUG. 6, 1979	SACRAMENTO	
SCOTT HOWES FISHMAN	NOV. 12, 1985	PENNGROVE	
ANDREW MARK FISHMAN	JAN. 1, 1987	PENNGROVE	
SAMUEL JESSE FISHMAN	DEC. 3, 1987	OAKLAND	
JESSICA FISHMAN	MAY 31, 1990	OAKLAND	
MICHAEL FISHMAN	JAN. 29, 1990	PENNGROVE	

*Please include maiden name of mother and grandmothers.

THANK YOU!